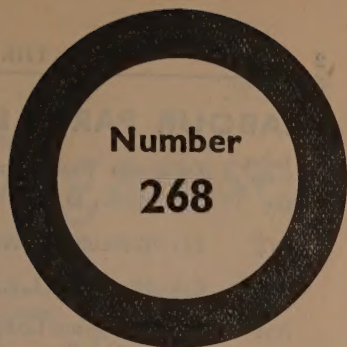


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SERIAL No 268.



The LABOUR ORGANISER

**Edited by
H. DRINKWATER**

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**Points for
Party**

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**Points for
Parliament
and**

.....
**Points for
Other People**
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Proprietors: The National Union of Labour Organisers and Election Agents

ESTABLISHED 1920

LABOUR PARTY LIST OF D.L.P. ALTERATIONS

Index No.	Description	Name of Organisation	Present Secretary and Address
G3	CD	Luton D.L.P.	Coun. W. G. VEALS, 3, Union Street, Luton, Beds.
B14	BD	Birkenhead West D.L.P.	Mr. J. FLYNN, 105, Claughton Road, Birkenhead, Cheshire.
F50	CD	Honiton D.L.P.	Mrs. A. A. BIRKINSHAW, 132, Egremont Road, Exmouth, Devon.
A72	CD	Houghton-Le-Spring D.L.P.	Mr. J. HAMILTON, 11, Church Street, Shinee Row, Philadelphia, Co. Durham.
G89	CD	Chelmsford D.L.P.	Mr. H. H. RUSSELL, 111, Springfield Park Road, Chelmsford, Essex.
F101	BD	Bristol West D.L.P.	Mr. J. H. KNIGHT, 53, Beverley Road, Horfield, Bristol, 7.
F106	CD	Stroud D.L.P.	Mr. W. E. WADE, Green Farm, Fretherne, Glos.
D109/11	DB	Portsmouth B.L.P.	Mr. J. BLITZ, 82, Percy Road, Southsea, Hants.
D115	CD	Fareham D.L.P.	Mr. J. W. TITHERIDGE, 6, Highfield Road, Gosport, Hants.
G126	CD	Hunts. D.L.P.	Miss K. H. BUCKERIDGE, 9, East Street, Newtown, Huntingdon.
B203	CD	Waterloo D.L.P. & T.C.	Mr. E. HARTLEY, 48, Victoria Road, Great Crosby, Liverpool, 23.
E249	BD	Islington West D.L.P.	Mr. G. B. NAISH, L.C.C., 445, Liverpool Road, London, N.7.
E274/8	DB	Wandsworth B.L.P. & T.C.	Mr. H. HANDFORD, 5, Brookwood Road, Wandsworth, London, S.W.18.
L311	CD	Wellingborough D.L.P.	Mr. C. W. PAGE, 8, Broad Green, Wellingborough, Northants.
A313/16	DB	Newcastle City B.L.P.	Mr. W. B. LEWCOCK, 3, Higham Place, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 2.
M331	SB	Oxford City D.L.P.	Mr. W. WILKINSON, 15, White Road, Cowley, Oxford.
F343	CD	Weston-super-Mare D.L.P.	Mr. W. A. SIMPSON, Civilian Quarters, R.A.F. Camp, Locking, Weston-super-Mare, Som.
D373	SB	Richmond D.L.P. & T.C.	Mr. J. DEARLOVE, 10, Rosemont Road, Richmond, Surrey.
D375	CD	Chertsey D.L.P.	Mrs. B. WALLACE, Surrey Lodge, Albany Crescent, Claygate, Surrey.
M399	BD	Sparkbrook D.L.P.	Mr. S. BRYAN, 13, Ladypool Avenue, Ladypool Road, Sparkbrook, Birmingham, 12.
F412	CD	Westbury D.L.P.	Mr. T. PUGH, Beltane School, Shaw Hill, Melksham, Wilts.
C429	BD	Hull North-West D.L.P.	Mrs. L. KENNEDY, 4, Victoria Cottages, Beaconsfield Street, Hull.
H477	CD	Cardiganshire D.L.P.	Mrs. EMRYS JONES, B.Sc., J.P., Goodybryn, Synod, Llandyssul, Cardigans.
J511	BD	Aberdeen South D.L.P.	Mr. F. BARTLETT, 15, Watson Street, Aberdeen.
J514	CD	Aberdeen & Kincardine West D.L.P.	Mrs. I. C. GRANT, Rosevilla, Alford, Aberdeenshire.
J541	BD	Gorbals D.L.P.	Mr. W. R. AGNEW, 37a, Eglinton Street, Glasgow, C.5.

SPECIAL NOTICE: Readers are reminded that an entry in this list cannot be taken by us as an instruction to re-address supplies of the "L.O." If this is required we must be specially notified.

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The L.P. Annual Conference

Some of the Resolutions

Nearly 300 resolutions by D.L.P.s and Federations to the Annual Conference Agenda seems to testify to the virility and keen interest lying in the constituencies, despite nearly five years of war. There are less than a dozen and a half from all the Trade Unions and the Socialist Societies put together.

This seems to us to be a significant situation, and rather a disquieting one. Have the Unions no time during the war to devote to the multifarious matters concerning the organisation of the Party and the welfare of the people that are raised by these resolutions? Too multifarious, we think, even if they took the whole time of Conference.

Maybe the Unions are satisfied that the lead in these matters should go to the Local Parties. Quite an excellent thought in its way—but what about the voting?

There are certain matters on which the Local Parties feel deeply. They have raised these matters: Will the big votes or voters take note of this interest, backed by special knowledge and experience of facts (some of immense portent to the Party's future), give heed and give reward, by way of votes, to those who know, and feel, and fight?

• • •

How many Parties have sent in amendments to the Party Constitution and Standing Orders we don't know

yet. The Standing Orders Committee merely say that various such amendments have been received from affiliated organisations, and that they will be published in the final agenda, together with a number of amendments to be proposed by the N.E.C. This makes us curious as to how affiliated organisations are to propose amendments to these resolutions or to those of the N.E.C. itself.

That about 40 organisations, all D.L.P.s but one (and that a Federation) have tabled resolutions demanding in almost all cases the termination (and in others the modification) of the Electoral Truce is a striking feature of the agenda. It denotes a country-wide dissatisfaction with the present situation, amounting if not to a revolt, to a revulsion of feeling that the Conference, we feel, will be compelled to try and meet.

Moreover, 16 Parties and N.U.D.A.W., whose resolutions appear under the heading "Socialist Ideals and the General Election," seek in differing terms a clear declaration of Labour's policy for the next General Election and most of them desire it to be clear that under no circumstances will Labour fight in a Coalition. Withdrawal at the earliest possible moment is demanded in some resolutions.

The genesis of all these resolutions is, we believe, the widespread feeling

that unless Labour gets a clear understanding, *at this Conference*, with its leaders and its Executive as to when and how Labour will leave the Coalition, we shall find that before the next Conference, the General Election is upon us, with Labour hopelessly compromised in its policy and in its freedom. And the policy of drift is the performance of *felo de se*.

There are a number of resolutions on Electoral Reform, but they are mostly out-dated, because the Speakers' Conference may have issued its report by the time Conference meets, or certainly not long after. The legal gentlemen (Haldane Society) who want Proportional Representation, the lawyer's paradise, are, therefore, out of time.

There are several resolutions demanding votes at 18. We shall look forward to hearing some of Labour's arch-conscriptionists of boys and girls, tell us how this measure of justice can be denied on grounds of justice, equity, or for that matter human and common-sense rights.

Rotherham has a varied programme of 14 proposals with only three of

which we disagree. But it can be debated or voted upon in respect of each point. Parties who want a Party electoral programme will probably be told to see what the Speakers' Conference proposes and then to send their suggestions to the N.E.C. or await the next opportunity.

Inevitably the question of organising Youth comes up again. A Youth organiser is called for, but the happiest suggestion is that of Luton, who want to see the 14-15's enrolled with full rights at 16 (we prefer 18). This, however, is now being done by some Parties—but oh, the tragedy of Labour's handling of adolescence! Three hundred resolutions and one only on this matter. Nobody cares for the children till they grow up—then a Labour Minister wants their bodies, or mayhap both their bodies and their souls. "Liberty!"—what crimes are committed in thy name.

It is interesting to note that nine local organisations want the restoration of Local Government elections. And about time, too, for in some L.G. areas the unrepresentative character

GLASGOW CITY LABOUR PARTY

requires the services of a **Full-time Organising Secretary**, who must be a Trade Unionist and Labour Party member and have an intimate knowledge of the Labour, Trades Union and Co-operative Movements. Salary in accordance with National Labour Agents' Scale.

Forms of application can be had from the Party Office,
20 BATH STREET, GLASGOW, C.2.

Closing date for return of applications—**19th May, 1944.**

POLITICAL AGENT

The London Co-operative Society, Ltd., Political Committee, invite applications for the position of full-time Agent for a London Constituency. Salary—National Scale. Knowledge of the Co-operative Movement essential. Apply, stating age, qualifications, experience, etc., together with two references, not later than **29th April, 1944**, to—

"AGENT,"

L.C.S. POLITICAL COMMITTEE,
PIONEER HOUSE,
348 GRAYS INN ROAD,
LONDON, W.C.1.

of the Councils is a scandal. Will Conference deny to Labour in the constituencies the benefit of that "swing to the left" which everybody believes in, or must the towns and counties go on suffering under the odious rule of retrograde buffers elected long, long ago (before the new age) and of others, who have never even been elected?

There is sure to be an interesting discussion under what is labelled "Progressive Unity," being resolutions which aim to instigate a new sort of Popular Front. As we explain elsewhere we cannot believe such new alliance would work, but we do agree with steps to smooth out difficulties between sections of the Social Democratic Movement only. Even the Methodists amalgamated their "connections" two or three decades ago.

While we believe that little parties with big names and loud voices should not be taken too seriously, and that the elephant and the flea exist "side by side," not because of partnership, but because of the elephant's inability to get the flea underfoot; we also believe that the elephant can lose no self-respect by looking for the flea and asking what it is all about?

And isn't that the real position except with Common Wealth? And there the remedy lies not in coalition, but in self-examination. *Why* is our powder pinched; is it because we have been afraid to use it, for fear of blowing up our war-time friends?

* * *

The "block vote" will have to be defended at this Conference, on three resolutions, but (under another heading), an ingenious suggestion from North St. Pancras would seem to remove the difficulty and transfer half the votes to the D.L.P.s! It proposes that T.U. affiliations should, in future, be half to the National Party and half to the L.L.P.s. Now, really, can you see H.O. giving up half its income, and the T.U. delegates their annual outing, just to slog away all the year on local E.C. and Ward Committees? We ourselves love, and have loved under a new moon; but we never asked for it!

When Conference comes to deal with the relationship between the Unions and the Party we believe our friends will

find some move forward has been made by the Unions in enlightenment to the situation in the constituencies. That is a comforting thought and these resolutions do no harm by ventilating the insufficiency of finance in the constituencies and the all-too-weak position of the constituency Parties in determining national policy and administration.

We note that Cambridgeshire T.C. & D.L.P. want the by-election levy reduced to 5/- during the continuation of the Truce. But Cambridgeshire is also one of the Parties demanding the end of the Truce. Is this what is called putting a trifle each way?

Glamorgan Federation ask the N.E.C. to devise a scheme whereby Federations shall receive assistance from national funds. The subject of poor Federation finances requires attention, but isn't the best way to pay attention to constituency finance, and give D.L.P.s the power to pay?

There are lots of other resolutions we wish we could comment on, but our space is exhausted.

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THIS IS PERSONAL

LABOUR'S NEW SECRETARY

Mr. Morgan Phillips is to be the new Secretary of the Labour Party.

Mr. Phillips, who has been for the past two and a half years Secretary of the Labour Party Research Department at Transport House, is 41 years of age. He has had a varied career in the Labour Movement and became a member in 1920. Secretary of the Bargoed Local Labour Party 1923-25, and Chairman of the Bargoed Steam Coal Lodge of the South Wales Miners' Federation 1924-26, a scholarship took him for a two years' residential course at the Labour College in London.

During the next nine years he was Secretary and Agent first of the West Fulham Divisional Labour Party and then of the Whitechapel Divisional Labour Party. He was a member of the Fulham Borough Council and Chairman of its Finance Committee from 1934-37. Between 1930 and 1932 he was an Examiner for the National Council of Labour Colleges Correspondence Courses in Economics, Trade Unionism, Industrial History, Economic Geography, Public Speaking, and Local Government. He is a member of the National Union of Labour Organisers.

He became Propaganda Officer at Transport House in 1937 and Eastern Counties Organiser in 1940. From 1941 onwards when he took charge of the Research Department he has been closely associated with the Policy and Reconstruction work of the Party, and Editor of the Labour Party Bulletin.

Mr. Phillips will take up his new duties following the Labour Party Conference at Whitsun, when Mr. J. S. Middleton will retire after over nine years' tenure of the Secretaryship, and forty years' service at Party Headquarters.

CECIL MANNING, M.P.

Cecil Manning's election as M.P. for North Camberwell is a reward well earned by a Labour agent whose service carries back 25 years. Cecil lost his right arm when a rifleman in the Great War and his portrait hangs in his old school hall. He has had a busy and brilliant career since then.

The Returning Officer in this election was Coun. J. H. Round, J.P., Mayor of Camberwell, and agent in North-West Camberwell. This is surely unique: both of course are members of the National Union of Labour Organisers, and both have given public service of no mean order.

Mr. Manning's election address was commendably brief. We note that it was delivered door-to-door because of the many removals. Poll-cards were sent to every elector who could be traced. The figures of this election, however, show the urgent necessity for putting the Parliament Act into operation in relation to by-elections at the earliest possible moment.

HARRY BAINBRIDGE

Readers who notice a change this month in the secretaryship at Houghton-le-Spring shouldn't jump to the conclusion that our old friend, Harry Bainbridge, is out of the picture. Notwithstanding that he has recently undergone a major operation, Harry carries on as agent. But he has given up the Party Secretaryship and writes:

"I felt the wrench very much, as nearly all of my life has been spent amongst the forces of Trades Unionism, Co-operative Movements and Labour and Socialist organisations. I was a member of a Co-operative Society at 18 years of age, Secretary of a Miners' Lodge at 23, 30 years a member of the I.L.P., 12 years secretary of a Branch.

"I have had no hobbies apart from these and other progressive movements, and I look back with pleasure to the very many happy times, and the friendship and fellowship which resulted from my connection with them. On account of my physical disability I have not been able to attend Conferences and thereby meet with my colleagues and others in the Movement, which has been a great loss.

"However, I am hoping to be of some little use still, until the old chap with the scythe comes along and then 'swish.'"

Harry was only 72 on the 3rd of this month. We wish him joy and happiness in many more birthdays.

HOW TO GET THOSE WHOM WE WANT INTO THE PARTY

Fifth Article

Previous articles have shown that we lay stress upon the importance of strata in the electorate — on what Sidney Webb named “stratified electioneering.”

We have pointed out that social strata, like those of nature, do not lie layer by layer in simple form and easy access. Nor is there a lot of segregation to help; doctors, lawyers, L.G. officers, business executives, ordinary professional men, are jumbled up together, and if mainly they do live in the better class houses, it is just those houses which are not canvassed. And if they were, there would be poor results because of the lack of introductions and access.

* * *

This is just where stratified methods come in. Doctors can be interested as doctors, teachers as teachers, L.G. officials as L.G. officials, and lots of others in like way.

Consider now what a lot of our comprehensive policy has a special appeal to certain classes. Special lectures and functions with picked speakers are an essential if much headway is to be made. And this method *has* been tried and found successful.

The speaker is all-important, for he or she is to talk shop to specialists, not to give a propaganda speech to an audience drawn by subterfuge, or absent because the specialist or specialised subject has been badly introduced.

The agricultural classes were drawn in large numbers a few years ago to the Labour Party's Agricultural Conferences. That was because we set out to get them by correct invitation and attraction. The fundamental changes (of which the townsman often knows little) accepted by agriculture during the war were largely made acceptable because the ideas were implanted at those Conferences. And if we didn't get farmers into membership that was because we sent the invitations with a different object, and there was no

follow-up. Our policy gained, but we had no conception of the harvest.

A man or woman will attend a function which concerns his vocation. That is the pivot or fulcrum on which to work; but to get a person to attend any meeting under unusual auspices one must observe two precautions.

The first is to make certain of interest. A circular boosting Party membership would be suicidal. But a well got-up circular which indicated mainly our interest or point of view on the subject, plus information as to the speaker's qualifications, would be ideal as a draw. Beware of the snare set in sight of the bird.

The second precaution is to avoid seeking too early results. Few people would join a Party on hearing one solitary lecture under its auspices.

This catering for classes must be continuous if it is to be successful. And if continued, what future might there be for some of these gatherings of persons getting more and more intimate with each other and with the Party. Let the scoffer who sneers at all this trouble to land new classes of members and, to strengthen the Party with brains and intellect, reflect on the million efforts we have made to land the workers; what seed we have sown by the way-side, what countless meetings we have held, and the ding-dong propaganda of 44 years, resulting in—what number of members?

* * *

Here we leave specialisation to turn to the general problem again. We want, in general terms:

- (a) Men members;
- (b) women members;
- (c) young members.

Now all our propaganda is indirectly a membership effort; so, too, is all our literature selling. Much of our behaviour on L.G. bodies and in Parliament is also intended, or should be, as propaganda effort, or publicity with

the same intention, i.e., to spread our views and strengthen our membership.

We find it is not enough: so we go membership getting.

In olden days our primitive farmers scratched the land and sowed seed broadcast, much of it being wasted.

To-day farmers scientifically manure the land, cultivate it thoroughly, and the seed is dropped one by one, without waste.

Labour is beginning to see that its earlier ideas of broadcasting membership, of calling all people to the feast, didn't bring in the right guests nor sufficient of them. The house-to-house idea, though productive often of good results, is also a heavy waste of our comrades' labour. The selected lists to canvass from are better.

We do not say this in order to discourage door-to-door canvassing, which indeed is often the only feasible way of beginning work. We ourselves have had to tackle this method as the only possible way of finding supporters to call a meeting or form a Local Party; but how we always longed for a list of some sort; and we did, always, make efforts to get recommendations or introductions from each supporter we found.

* * *

We once knew an old book canvasser whose success was always a mystery to us. He never canvassed door-to-door, yet descending upon a locality or village, he stuck there: he was never to be seen or met yet he always got a sheaf of orders. He wasn't to be seen because he was inside, often even for meals, and was being privily pushed and introduced next door or to a neighbour via the back and private ways.

This man's method we found out was to strike up conversation with the first person who fell handy on walking down a road. He interested them, for he was a fine mixer, and presently out came the specimen book from his pocket. Order or no order he generally succeeded in getting the name of someone whom his chance acquaintance thought might or ought to be interested, and he got the name of the acquaintance also.

Thus armed he was fully armed, for it is half the battle to know the victim's name and nearly the other half to visit someone at the suggestion (enlarged into a recommendation) of

one who now was spoken of as a "friend"!

"Come on in!" Our friend was over the line then. The rest was cat's meat to an old hand. Sometimes he didn't sell, more often he did; but always he got more introductions. His further calls were intimate visits, calls upon friends, neighbours and relatives which to a chap who knew how to handle his advantages was the cat's pyjamas as the source of orders.

Please don't accuse us of recommending this wily old rascal's ways. But we mention it as proving the value of introduction, of knowing something about the individual; maybe also the advantages of the weeniest bit of guile.

* * *

The smartest agents in the country, the cleverest organisers, of whatever Party they be, always prepare lists; the lists vary, schools, halls, charges, areas attended to, speakers, etc. But the most secret, yet the most important, is the preparation of lists of persons to be worked upon, i.e., lists of teachers, professional men, moneyed or sympathetic persons, T.U. officials (not only secretaries), lapsed members, social and educational societies, deaths, new businesses (a Tory method), letter writers to newspapers, etc., etc.

There is an endless variety in these lists according to the particular Party. But we cannot emphasise too strongly that it is these carefully-prepared lists which make possible any attempt at stratified propaganda or any really effective canvass for membership, except on the door-to-door plan.

If you are going out to-night seeking members, how much easier and pleasanter the work is made if in your hand you have a dozen cards or slips of paper, relating to the people you are to visit. This one is an old member, that one a T.U. Branch Chairman, the other the son of an old supporter; No. 4's wife is a woman section member; No. 5 was an enthusiast at the last election and attends Labour meetings; No. 6 recently wrote to the "Daily Pest" on the Education Bill! No. 7 is a known sympathiser, recommended by Coun. Sound—and so on, and so on. That sort of thing is surely easier work.

But—lists need preparation. And their preparation entails work of varying kinds emphasising the point

recently made in the "L.O." that there is a little work of some sort for every sort of member.

Writing cards or slips from old records is one of these jobs—old membership lists, canvass returns, or Gallup canvasses of our own Party in search of names of known sympathisers. There is even a little job for one in ticking off useful information always to be got out of an astute study of the local rag. *(To be continued)*

THE NEW WEAPON

How to study working-class film development

The Workers' Film Association, Ltd. have made arrangements for their Annual Film School which is being held at the Birmingham University from July 21st to 28th next.

A representative list of lecturers has been obtained, including Sidney L. Bernstein, film adviser to the Ministry of Information, Geoffrey Bell of the British Council; Captain Roy Boulting, the producer of *Pastor Hall* and *Thunder Rock*; Bernard Miles, the film actor; D. C. Finch, the cameraman; also a number of technicians. The subjects under discussion include "The Future of the Film Industry in this Country," "The part the film should occupy in our social life," "The film as an aid to scientific education," "The Film and the Future of Man," and "Should a film actor interest himself in the social content of a film."

These lectures will be followed by more technical subjects, such as "How to use a cine-camera," "How to use a projector," "Shooting films, on location, in the studio, with advice on make-up, montage, etc." With the increasing importance of the screen in political propaganda and in Party work the above opportunities are of intense interest to our readers. We hope Parties and Federations will see the necessity of sending at least one person to look into these matters.

During the week, many well-known films will be screened, including "World of Plenty," "Harnessing Power in the Highlands," "Two Good Fairies," "Glimpses of Soviet Science," "Revival of Organisms," "Lone White Sail" and "Battle of the Ukraine." Special visits will be paid during the

period of the school to Birmingham's Civic Centres, Bournville, and the establishments of the Co-operative Society. The School will open on Friday with a series of one-act plays by the Birmingham Co-operative Players. Students are expected to bring their own cine-cameras, as shooting on location has been arranged.

A National Film Conference is also being held on Saturday, 22nd July, at the Assembly Hall of the Birmingham Co-operative Society, High Street, Birmingham 4, on "The Use of the Film in the Solution of Post-War Problems." The Conference will open at 2.30 p.m., the speakers being Paul Rotha, producer of "World of Plenty," who will speak on "The Use of Films in preparing young people for their post-war tasks"; J. G. Crowther, British Council, "The Use of Films for informing the public on the Social Use of Visual Aids to advance the Social Aims of the Workers."

Representatives from all Trade Unions, Co-operative Societies and Labour Parties, together with Film Societies, are being invited to the School and Conference, the cost for attendance working out at 18s. 6d. per day.

We are asked by Mr. Morton, whose advertisement of duplicators and supplies again appears in this issue, to ask if there are any Parties who are prepared to sell to other Parties their Morton Falcon machines? Mr. Morton's sale charts show that some 200 to 300 machines are about, some doubtless idle owing to war conditions. This would save licence rejections disappointment and cost to some Parties and the selling and buying Parties will be put in touch with each other by Mr. Morton so that they can arrange a sale between themselves. This is a very kind offer and bespeaks the difficulties of the times.

"What is a D.L.P.?" That is a question recently put in a general knowledge contest at Worcester Royal Grammar School. It was a floorer and Peter Drinkwater, aged 13, took the points. Following in father's footsteps and putting in propaganda at odd moments, eh? May we all do it.

SOME REPORTS AND BALANCE SHEETS

The reports of the Regional Councils are now coming in and the first one is a report of progress all along the line. Yorkshire Regional Council has just held its Annual Conference with over 300 delegates as against 248. It was an impressive gathering. The E.C., apart from pots of useful and routine work in both the field of organisation and propaganda were able to report a largely increased affiliation and a successful financial year.

We are proud to note that this Council is considering the extension of the influence, and possible regional application, of the weekly Labour newspapers published in its area.

The Lancashire and Cheshire Regional Council does not close its year in December but in June, though from other circulars we gather that since the last report the affiliated membership has risen to 515,000. The individual membership has also risen to 42,000. The influence of such a membership must be immense. The Council is now busy with the Year of Party Development in which we doubt not this area will do well.

Surrey Federation report an active year and 100 per cent. membership of Parties. The report indicates the many useful functions such Federations perform, and the accounts are the most satisfactory of any Federation accounts we have seen. There is an average attendance of 20 per meeting, which is also encouraging.

Woolwich Labour Party leads the field among D.L.P.s with a membership of 3,522—over 400 increase. The membership income was £564 3s. 5d., increase £70. With other income, including affiliations £742, the total reached £1,928. There was a handsome saving on the year. This year Woolwich salutes its famous Treasurer, Coun. Jas. Newman, J.P. Mr. Newman has given 40 years of honorary service to the Party and has been Treasurer since 1909.

Derby Labour Party increased its affiliated membership last year by 1,446, and this membership now reaches the formidable total of 16,407. The individual membership target was reached, and funds showed good progress. The Socials Fund transferred £181 to the Party's benefit and further special efforts produced £82 for the Development Fund and £60 for the General Party account.

Newport Labour Party's Fighting Fund of £1,000, mentioned previously in the "L.O.," is well away with £291 in hand and other sums in the hands of organisations. The total is expected to be reached this year. Membership income at £226 is an increase of £33. This D.L.P. sent out a questionnaire regarding the Electoral Truce and report that the replies received indicate a very strong feeling for ending the Truce.

Aston (Birmingham) D.L.P. is an old Socialist Movement which fell on evil days, and now the tide has turned again, thanks to a few stalwarts who have looked for fresh blood, and found it, more than doubling the membership last year. Moreover, the Party show a live list of activities throughout the year and in addition to normal income they raised £116 for the Borough Victory Fund. Thus the clouds pass and smiles come back again.

Cambridge T.C. and L.P. will remember 1943 as the year in which the last item owing for its premises was paid off, and now it has a fine hall valued, with equipment, at about £1,400. Bravo, ye brave. Cambridge also has good balances in several accounts. It is sad to see that this Party suffered severely last year by deaths among its key people who did not live to see the end of a triumphant year.

Aberavon is one of the virile Parties of South Wales, and the report of its annual meeting indicates keen interest and clear vision among its members. This is a famous Division and it is good to see activities well maintained.

(Continued on Page 14)

“THE TREND TO THE LEFT”

IS IT OURS?

As we remarked in another connection last month, “the trend to the left” will be amply catered for by every Party at the next election, and certainly by the traditionally conservative reactionary (or slow-to-change-things) Tory Party: for it has been truly said that this war is less a war than a revolution. Even the mightiest mountain yields its head and body to the mightier still glaciers that tear its side. There is parallel to this in the Churches. As the irresistible advance of Truth and Science uncovered one “foundation of faith” after another to show its falsity, the Churches changed their beliefs. To-day the teaching of the orthodox churches is completely different from that of only fifty years ago. And even the advance of science is heralded (and harnessed) as “progressive revelation.” The essential point is that the power of the Church remains. Teachings come and teachings go; but the power of the parson is eternal.

So with the Tory Party. “Progressive revelation” is the wonder of the ages: We have many good friends among the Tory hordes, parsons, colonels, captains, a Hunt Master, big and little business men, T.P. Party officials and even a few philanthropists. Their talk has been terribly “left” for two or three years, but when I press them too far I rediscover the old truism “that the rich man will do anything for the worker except get off his back!”

How came this leftward swing? Believe me, it is not all due to the Labour Party. The latter may make concrete proposals, but the swing to the left is not around proposals at all—yet. It is psychological; and largely it is due to the fact that every politician, realising the woeful little the workers could get out of the war, and the damnable share they had to bear of it, felt constrained to offer the glad new world that could be obtained after the war—whenever that might be!

It seemed a safe promise. But unlike the parson’s hereafter the glory

and the gladness was to come in our lifetime in 1942 or 1943 or 1944 or 1945 or 1946—sometime, anyhow, that we could date, though the date and the fulfilment were always a bit hazy.

All this talk of something wonderfully different led to something not quite expected, we believe, by the promisers. They were taken at their word, and like a liar with an oft-repeated lie, even the utterers began to believe and cast about for the new structure. The common people, who have at least some discernment, readily realised that a new world could hardly be born of the Right. So they turned Left.

That, looking left, the people see mainly a turmoil of sections, and a Labour Party full of proposals, but faint of fight, and not ready for it, is not our fault. But it is the exact situation none the less.

* * *

To-day we have a people as ripe for change and as malleable in their minds as to what that change should be, as any people since that day great Cæsar fell. It is the grandest, most glorious opportunity that ever knocked at Labour’s door, or the door of any other Party. It is “up our street” with a certainty, but how do we reap, how do we cash in?

Here we record with profound conviction that this situation is not due to Labour’s part in the Government but rather in spite of it. The “trend to the left” is a revulsion from war, not a reward for it. It is evidence that the people have their minds at last on construction instead of destruction. Labour’s share of credit is due to the fact that quite early in the war it had the courage to come out with after-war plans and it has stuck to them ever since.

Even so Labour’s plans, even to-day, may fail in a deluge of jingoism and elated war feeling. On the other hand we believe the “trend” is so widespread that Labour can come out the winner on its merits, on its plans, on its catering for the nation-wide need: if only it will put its heart into it, shake off its

hesitancy, and at the same time shake off some of its false gods!

What should Labour do if it is to profit by the hour and the signs of the times? The portents do not show that Labour is galloping home with the great leftward swing in its keeping. If our Ministers have pulled the Tories a little over the line that is a Tory gain, not one for the people or our Party. The "left" itself is a chaos of schisms: unity of purpose is hardly to be seen except in the field of destruction, albeit Labour stands out as the biggest lad in the gang.

* * *

Should Labour go further "left"? Intrinsically Labour's policy is as truly "left" as that of any sect or schism. But Labour's actions are sometimes woefully at variance with its policy, this being especially true in its Parliamentary functioning. Indeed, the Parliamentary Party in the main is a pain in the neck to thousands of loyal Labourites. It does not live up to the brilliance of Labour's policy. And as for "the trend to the left" the Parliamentary Party is marching the other way.

Almost all internal criticism centres round Labour's actions. The criticism that bursts around "Transport House" is, however, sometimes unfair and ill-informed. The N.E.C. does not control the Parliamentary Party though it too often becomes the apologist for it. And much criticism must be cancelled out, because one cannot make bricks without straw: and "Transport House" is understaffed, ill-equipped, and unprovided with the necessary funds to do anything startling, or anything big. The will of the Movement? No!—the dead hand of the Right!

But we are mocked in the country by Labour's subservience in the House. Yet what can one expect of the old guards of 1935, in whom the swing to the left stirs no younger passions or vivid glimpses of a suffering Democracy yearning for its freedom? At least so it seems.

What is wanted to-day is fearless advocacy of Labour's own policy, less defence and more condemnation of Coalition compromises, and a toning down of some of the hate propaganda so that the eyes of Democracy shall be fastened on the true rebuilding of civilisation both here and abroad.

Can Labour go further "left"? We don't think so, unless it goes Communist; and we don't regard Communism as a "left" policy but as a different one, with ideals of dictatorship and tyranny altogether alien to the concepts of Democracy. Nor can we compromise with Communism, for its exponents in this country have been notorious for trickiness in method and inconsistency in principle.

But "left" Labour can certainly be, and is, *if it advocates its own policy*. The leftward trend can be harnessed to our advancing chariot only if we are true to it, i.e., true to ourselves too.

* * *

But the despair of many is the divisions in the "left." We won't enquire whence these came; but they are there.

One proposed remedy is a grand alliance of all the left Parties. We don't think this desirable or workable. Would the tail wag the dog, or the dog the tail? But it would be a dog with many tails, some only stumps; a curiosity in a circus, but a calamity in politics.

Yet beyond quite temporary obstacles, such as the Electoral Truce, what essential matter divides the "left"? We see nothing: but we do see in all this talk of a left Coalition an opportunity for the Labour Party in its greatness (and, we hope, in its shortly-to-be-renewed strength), to make a gesture. Labour can never enter into equal partnerships, with juniors a hundredth part its size. But entering into a great battle is it wise for the sake of past differences and to-day's dignity, to ignore thinking and active minorities, without an effort at consultation or for agreements? We know of no fragment of the left which differs from Labour so fundamentally as do delegates at Party Conferences among themselves. And this is true even of great sections of the Common Wealth Movement.

To-day the people are groping "left." If no sure guiding hand reaches them, or if several hands grab at once, then is there not release for them along the broad and easy road so seductively strewn with roses by our friends, and the workers' enemies, the Tories? That the Tories may yet reap from "the swing" is quite on the cards. But not if we, by opening the eyes of our Movement, can do anything about it.

How to Reform Parliament

The aged dame wants waking up—says the Editor

We have received for review a copy of Mr. Pollard's recent booklet,* entitled as above.

The subject is topical, very much so, after Mr. Morrison's recent speech, and the well-informed author pursues his subject with an enlightened mind. He has received some co-operation from several Labour M.P.s (A. Creech Jones, Reg Sorensen, Glenvil Hall and Arthur Woodburn) who not necessarily agree with all the proposals made—nor do we. There has been some help, too, from other quarters, and the work of John Humphreys (of the P.R.S.) peeps out on Page 5.

The necessity for Parliamentary Reform is patent to all true democrats. If not undertaken soon a cry of "end or mend" may yet be heard. The position is really as bad as that.

Far too kind and non-critical, Mr. Pollard examines deficiency and function with thoroughness in the space at his command, but the remedies are too many to detail here.

The main proposal as we see it is the development of committee work, but not on the lines of Fred Jowett's old proposals. Mr. Pollard's suggestions are more practical, and the minor ones are conceived in a sound spirit. If adopted, Parliament might yet escape the public opprobrium which seems to be awaiting an expensive structure dying of its own conceit—a description which seems to be endorsed by the whole press judged by the fact that Parliamentary reports have disappeared, and only Parliamentary pranks and stunts are presented to the public.

We commend this booklet to our readers as an excellent contribution to a study in which they are keenly concerned; albeit they must remember that the author is a "two-chamber" man, and Labour sees no necessity in this. Also the Secretary of the P.R. Society had regard Mr. Pollard as

"sound" on that subject. With us it is quite the contrary, and we are not at all so keen on representation according to the strength of Parties on so many committees as those two gentlemen appear to be.

Mr. Herbert Morrison's recent speech advocating the saving of Parliamentary time by permitting the Departments to fill in the Bill, so to speak, seems to us to have been ill-timed. What would the Education Bill have looked like if this procedure had been in vogue?

Mr. Morrison didn't, we believe, mention that Parliament proceeds on its evil course of "legislation by decree" regardless of precautions and safeguards against the evils of this course recommended 12 years ago by a Committee on Ministers' Powers.

We think that the abuse of dictatorial powers, so clearly seen even in Mr. Morrison's own Department (as in Regulation 18b), and the far-flung tyrannical powers exercised by other Ministers during the war, have made people dubious about this plan. Labour tends to give Mr. Morrison's plan its support, but we fear that is running against the current. There is a widespread revulsion against our own tin-pot tyrants, and it is not going to be easy for Labour to maintain its case even for some most urgent and necessary controls in the face of the passion that has been aroused—let alone to advocate the handing over of legislation to these same big-wigs and brass-hats.

What surprises us is the ignorance of politicians to the growing distrust of themselves among the public and to the good-humoured contempt which is so often expressed for our legislators and all their concerns. Let them take note, for this is a voice from the country, and we speak of what we know.

Not for nothing, nor without result, did both Fascist and Communist Parties attack the British House of Commons and point to its unworkableness. We find that somehow the people have got to know of Parliament's unutterable conceit and pride in pom-

*"How to Reform Parliament," by Robert S. W. Pollard, 48 pp., Price 2s. The Forum Press, 119, Perry Vale, S.E.23.

posity, its slothful ghastly delays, its interminable harangues, and its mimicking of the dead and gone days of hundreds of years ago.

Of men in the street not one in ten gives Parliament a good name or even a kind word. Like bombing, mass murder and conscription, the House of Commons is suffered because the people see no alternative: and our wonderful "statesmen" can offer nothing better. It is a dangerous state of mind: dangerous for Democracy.

* * *

Although Mr. Pollard offers suggestions to alleviate the killing idleness which is the lot of so many "private" M.P.s, it surprises us that he offers no suggestions or criticism of an old-world talking shop with a circumlocution curriculum as long as its own ancestry. "The man who stole the mace" (which is silly journalese for just taking it off the table, and meekly handing it back again—instead of swinging it like a shillelah) must have felt as millions do about our silly "House."

The House of Commons is indeed a Bedlam of out-worn vanities, pretences and vain forms. Fancy calling a man whom you know to be a scamp "the Hon. and Gallant Member for —"!

But there is an object in Parliamentary tom-foolery. The game takes time, "business" is held up, legislation is deferred—the law of the let-be triumphs. Our Labour men are broken at the wheel of idled time and humiliating powerlessness, till they too worship at the shrine of Parliamentary picturesqueness. And when the cry comes "who goes home?" the weary are at rest.

Social sores fester on, unrighted wrong remains, men are born, grow up and they perish with the promise of their childhood unfulfilled. One hundred years go by and we haven't got Universal Suffrage, nor even heaps of other things agreed by majorities long ago—including school-leaving at 16, equal pay, or even Home Rule for Ireland!

We in the constituencies know what people really think of the garrulous old grandmother of Parliaments shuffling along in its dotage, too cowardly or too feeble to stand up to one man, as was recently shown, and too worn out to keep its own House in trim.

Mr. Pollard's proposed rejuvenation won't be enough. Won't *somebody* shake up the old girl?

If not—God save the People!

(Concluded from Page 10)

This Party still holds Divisional Conferences of 150 to 200 strong, which speaks something for the real Socialist feeling latent in the Division. The Party, too, is putting by money for the rainy day.

Barkston Ash, which in its report compares the present position with pre-war, is able to report a 33⅓ per cent. increase in affiliation and a membership of 548, compared with 580 in 1939—a nice jump last year. Funds were again saved and the General Election balance now stands at £212.

Morpeth D.L.P., with 605 individual members, is an increase of nearly 10 per cent. This Party recently held its 30th annual meeting. It reported a good saving on the year and paid special tribute to the women membership.

Several other reports are to hand, but our space being limited we ask our friends to excuse notice this month. We may deal with same next month.

We are asked to say that a few copies of "A Town and Country Plan for Surrey" (reviewed in a recent issue) are still available price 6d. Apply, Secretary, Kingston Labour Party, 2, Clarence Villas, Hawks Road, Kingston-on-Thames.



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Facing the Future

The latest issue of the L.D.N. (Labour Discussion Notes) contain the following instructive comments on the coming L.P. Annual Conference. It says:

"This year's Labour Party Conference may well fix the lines of the Party's structure and policy during the vital post-war years and its decisions will, therefore, be of the greatest importance. For this reason it is necessary to face the fact that the Conference is likely to coincide with the fierce fighting which we have been warned will accompany our invasion of Europe.

"Apart from the fact that the atmosphere at such a time will not be conducive to that calm and reasoned debate which should precede the laying down of our policy for so crucial a period, there are likely to be serious physical handicaps to a full-scale Conference. Many delegates may be unable to attend because of transport difficulties or because of urgent duties, whether as Cabinet Ministers or as Home Guards and Civil Defence workers. Under such circumstances it would be folly to attempt to arrive at vital decisions; on the other hand those decisions must on no account be postponed a day longer than necessary. Should it be found impossible to hold a full-scale Conference, only routine matters should be dealt with and the Conference adjourned until the earliest practicable occasion. [Why not adjourn the Conference till October?—Ed. "L.O."]

"The first essential is a definite statement that we shall break the coalition at the earliest possible moment after the task for which we entered it is clearly finished and that we intend to fight the next general election on our own distinctive policy." . . .

"Continuing, L.D.N. says:

"A strong and representative commission should be set up to consider the whole internal structure of the Party in the light of what is known and can be found out about the new social alignments. Newcomers to politics will want to enter the local parties in great numbers, as they did after the last war. But if these new recruits are to be won in sufficient numbers, the whole question of the Party's approach to them must be re-examined.

"The form and the geographical and

social direction of the Party's propaganda will have to be re-adjusted. We will be engaged upon the new task of building on an old foundation what will be a people's party rather than a party based almost entirely on the organised industrial workers.

"The Party can no longer afford to concentrate its most powerful force only at the points where the industrial workers are strong. Amongst measures that must be considered is a further development of decentralised, and regional organisation, to make the Party more flexible and to pool and spread resources over wider areas. Extremely important progress has been made in this direction during the war. Another important question is the selection and financing of Parliamentary Candidates. Here, not only the formal procedure but also the actual practice must be examined.

"Besides the recruitment of new forces into the local parties, many internal structural changes will have to be examined. We must reckon with an individual membership that will not only be different in many ways, but also much more numerous. An individual membership of at least a million will quickly become an attainable goal if we set about things in the right way. In the Party as it is at present organised an influx on this scale would set up severe internal strains and tensions.

"Changes must be made along two lines. Sufficient scope must be given to the membership of the local parties for political discussion and for an appropriate voice in the Party councils. Methods must be devised for regional discussions, preparatory to Conference, either in the existing Regional Councils (if they are adopted) or in Conferences of Divisional Labour Parties. The possibility of a national Conference of Divisional Labour Parties must also be considered.

"Changes will also have to be made inside the Conference itself. Not only will the vote of the Divisional Labour Parties be greatly enlarged; but so also will their actual attendance and representation at Conference. Increased individual membership will mean greater local funds and greater local interest.

"The question of the representation of the Divisional Labour Parties on the Executive will have to be examined again; as also will the method and weighting of voting on resolutions."

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